ISLAM

IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

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الإسلام دين الفطرة

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NO DOUBT THIS LIFE IS AN EXAMINATION

WHICH NEEDS YOUR FULL CONSIDERATION

AS TO WHAT YOU WILL TAKE TO YOUR LAST DESTINATION

ONLY **TRUE BELIEF** AND GOOD DEEDS ARE YOUR WAY TO

SALVATION

الإسلام دين الفطرة ؛ كتيب تعريفي بدين الإسلام ، ذُكر فيه :

1. الهدف من خلق البشر ،
2. إلى ماذا يدعو دين الإسلام ،
3. أدلة استحقاق ا   تعالى وحده للعبادة ،
4. أدلة بطلان الأديان الأخرى سواء كانت كتابية أو وثنية ،
5. الفرق بين الخالق والمخلوق ،
6. بيان معنى كلمة " الإسلام " ،
7. أركان الإيمان ، مع التركيز على ذكر حقيقة الأنبياء عليهم السلام على وجه العموم ، وعيسى وموسى ومحمد صلى ا   عليهم وسلم على وجه الخصوص ،
8. أركان الإسلام ،
9. الإسلام والأديان الأخرى ،

10. ذكر طرف من محاسن الدين الإسلامي ،
11. بيان عموم دين الإسلام لكافة البشر
12. مزايا تعاليم الدين الإسلامي
13. لماذا يجب على المكلف اعتناق دين الإسلام ،
14. خاتمة ،
15. بيان كيفية الدخول في دين الإسلام ،
16. ذكر مراجع علمية باللغة الإنجليزية لمن أراد مزيدا من الاطلاع على الدين الإسلامي ، مع ذكر بعض المواقع العلمية ودور النشر على شبكة الإنترنت .

وكان الفراغ منه في التاسع عشر من شهر ا المحرم لعام 1424 من الهجرة النبوية المباركة ، والحمد أولا وآخرا .

وكتبه ماجد بن سليمان الرسي

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ISLAM

IS YOUR BIRTHRIGHT

Each person is born in a religious environment that is not of his/her own choice. From the very beginning of human existence in this world, they are assigned the religion of their family or the ideology of the state. By the time individuals reach their teens they usually accept the beliefs of their parents or that of their particular society.

However, when some people mature and are exposed to other beliefs and ideologies, they begin to question the validity of their own beliefs. Seekers of truth often reach a point of confusion upon realizing that believers of every religion, sect, ideology and philosophy all claim to have the one and only correct religion or ideology. There are only three possibilities. They are either all correct; all wrong or only one is correct and the rest are wrong. They cannot all be right since all religions are different from each other in their fundamentals. Furthermore, the majority claim that they alone are correct and the rest are wrong. On the other hand, to claim

that they are all wrong is to deny that God revealed His will to humankind. This proposition is absurd to those who believe in a Wise Creator. So, which religion is the right one and how can the seeker of truth know it? This is the subject of the booklet in your hands.

In beginning one's search for which religion is true, one should keep four things in mind: **First**, God gave us the ability and intellect to make the crucial decision: WHAT IS THE TRUE RELIGION? **Second**, God, the Most Compassionate, did not leave us to go astray without any guidance. Indeed, He sent us prophets with scriptures to show us the right path. **Third**, seeking the true religion should be the most important thing in one's life because the everlasting life to come depends on it.[1] **Fourth**, one can determine the true path and make a rational and correct decision only if emotions and prejudices, which often blind one to reality, are put aside.

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[1] The Bible, in its present form, confirms that seeking the truth is the main cause for salvation. It states in John 8:32: "And ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free." Muslims believe that the existing form of the Bible contains facts of the original truth though it has been significantly altered.

I. PURPOSE FOR CREATION

Have you ever wondered about the reason of our existence? Have you ever wondered why we die, and where we go after death? What will happen to us in the end? Have you ever asked yourself why God made the earth and all that is in it under man's dominion? Why were the night and the day, and the sun and the moon created? What are we supposed to do during our lifetime? Were we created just to eat, drink, and enjoy ourselves before we die? As one poet put it:

"I do not know whence I have come.
I saw my feet walking on the road.
As they please I go and stop.
What am I doing here?
How did the road find me?
I do not know! I do not know! I do not know! "

God has emphasized in many verses of the Qur'an[2] that He did not create us without purpose. He said: "**What! Do you think that I created you simply in jest ? And that you would not be returned to Me?"**[3] (23:115) He also said: **"What! Does man think that he will be left to roam at his will?"** (75:36) In addition, He said: **"Do people think that they will be left to say: "We believe," and they will not be held accountable?"** (29:2)

Indeed, God Has created human beings for a purpose and with a purpose: TO WORSHIP HIM ALONE (Monotheism). He said**: "I have not created the Jinn and humankind except only to worship Me. I don't require provision or feeding from them. Surely Allah**[4] **is the All-provider, the Possessor of all strength, the Firm."** (51:56-58) In fact, all prophets told their people to worship God alone (Monotheism) and shun worshipping His creation (Paganism). God said: **"I assuredly sent among every people a messenger with the command: Worship Allah and avoid worshipping false gods."** (16:36)

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[2] Qur'an is the Holy Book revealed to Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him). Elaborate definition of Qur'an is explained on page 22.

[3] Please note that any quotation in this booklet from the Qur'an is the closest meaning to its translation from Arabic. It is not the text itself.

[4] As per Qur'an, "Allah" is the proper name for " God ".

Prophet Abraham, for example, believed in One God, who had no partner. Anyone who holds a different understanding of God than this has contradicted the religion of Abraham and follows falsehood. God says in the Qur'an: "**Those who reject the religion of Abraham make fools of themselves.**" (2:130)

Prophet Jesus was reported in the Gospels to have said: "*It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve Him only'*." (Luke 4:8)

Prophet Jacob also said (in the Qur'an) to his people: **"Indeed**, **those which you worship besides Allah are only names that you and your forefathers have established, for which Allah has sent down no authority. The command belongs only to Allah**. ***He has commanded that you worship none but Him*. That is the right religion, but most people do not understand."** (12:40)

II. THE BASIC MESSAGE OF ISLAM

The basic message of Islam is the same message of all the previous prophets: worship God **alone** and avoid worshipping anything besides Him, whether it is a person, place or thing, directly or indirectly. This basic principle of Monotheism is contained in the opening chapter of the Qur'an, known as Soorat al-Faatihah, verse 4: **"You alone we worship and from**

you alone we do seek help." In (4:36), God also said: "**Worship Allah and do not associate partners with Him.**" Muhammad, the last Prophet (mercy and peace of God be upon him) is reported to have said: **"Anyone who says: There is no god worthy of worship but Allah, and dies holding that belief will be granted paradise."**[5]

III. PROOFS FOR GOD'S RIGHT OF WORSHIP

Only God should be worshipped because He is the Creator and sustainer of all that exists. This Great Universe and everything that is in it cannot be the product of chance, and could not have created itself. Signs testifying that God is the only Creator can be seen throughout the earth and in the very soul of each person. God said in the Qur'an: **"It is Allah who created the sky and the earth, and sent down from the sky water by which He brought forth fruits for your sustenance. He subjected for you the ships to sail upon the sea at His command, and He subjected for you the rivers. And He subjected for you the sun and moon in continuous cycles, and He subjected for you the night and day. And He gave you all you asked Him for ."** (14:32-34)

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[5] Sahih Al-Bukhari (5827) and Sahih Muslim (94).

In the Qur’an, God mentions Prophet Abraham’s search for truth as an example of how those who follow God’s signs will be rightly guided to the worship of Him alone; God said: **“In this way I showed Abraham the kingdom of the heavens and the earth so that he would have faith with understanding and certainty. When the night covered him with darkness, he saw a star and said: ‘This is my Lord’, but when it set, he said: ‘I don’t like those that set.’ When he saw the moon rising up, he said: ‘This is my Lord’, but when it set, he said: ‘Unless my Lord guides me, I will certainly be among the people who went astray.’ When he saw the sun rising up he said: ‘This is my Lord, this is the greatest of all.’ But when it set, he said: ‘O my people! I am indeed free from what you join as partners with Allah. Verily, I have turned my face towards Allah who created the heavens and the earth and I reject those who associate partners with Allah (in worship).”**(6:75-79) Actually, in the Qur’an God calls people to continuously look at the Universe, as this will affirm the divine truth of His existence, His greatness and that He alone should be worshipped.

God alone deserves our worship because only He can answer our prayers. God says in the Qur’an: **“And your Lord says: Call on Me and I will answer your prayer.”** (40:60) Hence, if a human being prays to an idol and his prayers are answered, it is not the idol which actually answered his

prayers but God. Similarly, prayers to Jesus Christ, Buddha, Krishna, Saint Christopher, Saint Jude or to Prophet Muhammad, are not answered by them, but are answered by God. Consequently, prayer is an act of worship which should be directed to God alone.

Indeed, prophets who are worshipped besides Him did not tell people to worship them. Instead, the prophets warned their people against doing just that. For example, Islam teaches that Prophet Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was a human being who was created by God in a miraculous way. He was born of a mother, Mary, without a father and he worshipped God. He was not God, nor was he the son of God. He was neither one of three manifestations of God as Christians say, nor was he the son of a prostitute as the Jews say. He told his people (the tribes of Israel) to worship God alone. He did not tell people to worship either himself or his mother. Furthermore, Prophet Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon him) did not worship himself when he worshipped, rather he worshipped God. However, those who claim to be the followers of Jesus Christ today worship Jesus himself, claiming that he is God, and others also worship his mother calling her 'the mother of God.'! God says in the Qur'an that He will ask Prophet Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon him) on the Day of Judgment: **"O Jesus, son of Mary! Did you tell people: Take me and my mother as gods besides Allah? Then he will say: Glory to you, I could**

never say what I had no right to say. If I had said it, You would have known it, You know what is within myself, but I do not know what is within Yourself. Verily, You alone are the Knower of the unseen. I did not say to them except what You commanded me; to worship Allah, my Lord and your Lord, and I was a witness over them as long as I was among them, but when You raised me up, You were the observer over them, and You are the witness over all things." (5:116 - 117)

God emphasizes in the Qur'an that Prophet Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was neither killed nor crucified, but God raised him up into the heavens in body and spirit and he will be returned to the earth before the end of the world. Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) stated that Prophet Jesus would rule the earth according to the Islamic law, then he will die on earth like other human beings and will be buried and resurrected like them on the Day of Judgment. Hence, Prophet Jesus who was given life, was born from a woman's womb and circumcised, ate, slept, went to the toilet, grew up, prayed, and will die, should *never* be taken as God as all these characteristics are not the attributes of God, but of His creatures.

The New Testament states that Jesus Christ taught his followers to pray to God saying: **“Our Father[6] who art in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven.**” (Luke 11:2 / Matthew 6:9-10) Also, he taught that only those who submit to God would inherit paradise: **“None of those who call me ‘Lord’ will enter the Kingdom of God, except one who does the will of my Father in heaven.”**(Matthew 7:21) Prophet Jesus also pointed out that he himself submitted to the will of God: **“I cannot do anything of myself. I judge as I hear and my judgment is honest because I am not seeking my own will but the will of Him who sent me.”** (John 5:23)

In fact, there are many reports in the Gospels that show that Prophet Jesus made it clear to his followers that he was not God. For example, when speaking about the final hour, he said: **“No one knows about that day or hour, not even the angels in heaven, not the Son[7], but only the Father.”** (Mark 13:32)

Buddha, was a reformer who introduced a number of humanistic principles in the Hindu religion practiced in India. He did not claim to be

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[6] This is an example of the distortions that exist in the Gospel. " Father " should be " God ".

[7] This is another example of the distortions that exist in the Gospel. " Son " should be " the slave ".

God, nor did he suggest to his followers that he be worshipped. Yet, today most Buddhists have made him their God and they prostrate themselves before idols representing his likeness. In brief, from the perspective of the object worshipped, all religions today [except Islam] invite people to the worship of creation!

God's attributes point to the fact that God alone deserves worship. He is One, without relatives; He has neither father, son, mother nor wife. He is the Eternal Absolute. He neither gives birth, nor is He born, and there is nothing like Him. He is perfect in His knowledge, in His power, in His will, in His mercy and in all His other attributes. God is all-powerful and perfect, while human beings are weak and imperfect. That is how He defined Himself and how all prophets defined Him.

Another proof that God alone deserves to be worshipped can be found within the human soul. Islam teaches that all human beings have imprinted on their souls an awareness of God and a natural inclination towards worshipping Him alone imprinted on their souls. In the Qur'an, God explained that when He created Adam He caused all of Adam's descendants to come into existence and then He took a pledge from all of them saying: **"Am I not your Lord? To which they all replied: Yes, we testify to it."** God then explained why He had all of humankind bear witness that He is their Creator and only true God worthy of worship: **"That**

is in case you, humankind, may say on the Day of Resurrection: Indeed we were unaware of this." God further elaborated on this point saying: **"It is also in case you may say: It was our ancestors who made partners with Allah, and we are only their descendants, will you then destroy us for what those liars did?"** (7:173) Hence, people who associate partners with God in worship cannot claim on that day that they had no idea that Allah was the only god who deserved to be worshipped.

Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) reported that God said: **"I created my slaves upon the right religion, but devils made them go astray."**[8] He also said: **"Each child is born in a state of Islam. Then his parents make him a Jew, Christian or a Zoroastrian."**[9] Thus, Islam is the birthright of every human being, since every child is born with a natural belief in the existence of God and an inborn inclination towards worshipping Him **alone**. Just as the child submits to the physical laws which God has imposed on the physical world, in the same way its soul also submits naturally to the fact that God is the only Lord and Creator. But if their parents are following a different path, the child is usually not strong or aware enough to recognize the truth or resist the will of the parents. In such cases, the religion which the child follows is one of custom and

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[8] Sahih Muslim (2865).
[9] Sahih AlBukhari (1385) and Sahih Muslim (2658).

upbringing. But God, the Most Merciful and Compassionate, will not hold him to account or punish him for following a false religion before he reaches the age of reason and is exposed to the pure message of Islam.

IV. THE MESSAGE OF FALSE RELIGIONS

False religions, on the other hand, all teach **the worship of creation (Paganism)** in one way or another. Some religions call to idolatry indirectly while proclaiming God's unity, while others openly call to the worship of other gods besides God or along with God, instead of calling to the worship of God alone (pure Monotheism). Idolatry is the greatest sin that a human being could commit because it equates the Creator with the creation and diverts worship from the Creator to the creation. It also contradicts the very purpose for which humans were created; **the worship of God alone**. One who dies in a state of idolatry has sealed his or her fate in the next life. This is not an opinion, but a divinely revealed fact stated by God in the Qur'an: **"Verily, Allah will not forgive joining of partners with Him, but He may forgive sins less than that for whomsoever He wishes."** (4:48 & 116)

Man should not worship other than God because it makes no sense to worship the creation which is weak in nature, and neglect the

Creator who controls the whole Universe! God says in the Qur'an: "**Do they attribute to Me partners who created nothing but are themselves created? They can neither help others nor can they help themselves. And if you call them to guidance they will not follow you. It is the same for you whether you call them or you keep silent. Certainly, those whom you call upon besides Allah are slaves like yourselves. So call upon them and let them answer you if you are truthful. Do they have feet with which they walk, hands with which they hold, eyes with which they see? Or do they have ears with which they hear?**" (7:190-195)

The following is an example of a sign revealed by God to a man to show him the error of his idol-worship.

In the southeastern region of the Amazon jungle in Brazil, South America, a primitive tribe erected a new hut to house their main idol Skwatoo, representing the supreme God of all creation! The following day a young man entered the hut to pay homage to his god. While he was prostrating to what he had been taught was his creator and sustainer, a mangy, old and flea-ridden dog slunk into the hut. The young man looked up just in time to see the dog lift its hind leg and pass urine on the idol. Outraged, the young man chased the dog out of the temple, but when his rage died down, he realized that the idol could not be the Lord of the Universe. God must be elsewhere, he concluded. As strange as it may seem, the dog urinating on

the idol was a sign from God for that young man that his idol does not deserve to be worshipped. This sign contained the divine message that what he was worshipping was false. It liberated him from slavishly following his traditionally learned worship of a false god. As a result, this man was given a choice: either to seek the true God or to continue in the error of his ways.

V. GOD AND HIS CREATION

Islam emphasizes that God and His creation are distinctly different entities. God is neither a part of His creation nor is He mixed in with it. His creation is neither equal to Him in His attributes nor a part of Him. Indeed, God is the Most High; He is above all creation, above the heavens and above His Throne, as He informed us about Himself in the Qur'an and in the previous scriptures. This might seem obvious, but man's worship of creation instead of the Creator is to a large degree based on ignorance or negligence of this fact. The wrong belief that the essence of God is everywhere in His creation or that He is a part of His creation, has provided justification for the worship of God's creation. Philosophical idol worshipers justify their idolatry by saying that they do not actually worship the stone or metal image, but God who becomes concentrated in it during their rituals of worship! They claim that the stone idol is only a focal point for God's essence and is not itself God! Anyone who accepts the concept of

God being present in any way within His creation will be obliged to accept this argument in justification of idolatry.

Actually, those who have claimed divinity for themselves down through the ages have often based their claims on the mistaken belief that God is present in humans. Taking this belief one step further, they claim that God is more present in them than in others, and that other humans should therefore submit to them and worship them as God incarnate or as God concentrated within their person. Similarly, those who have asserted that others were God, after their deaths, have found fertile ground among those who accept the false belief of God's presence in man.

Some idol worshippers try to justify what they are doing by saying: "We treat idols as mediators and intercessors between us and God." This is also an incorrect belief because God does not need mediators between Him and people. He hears everything and knows all the needs of His creation. In fact, this argument reduces God to the level of His creatures who often use intermediaries to achieve their goals. In hundreds of Qur'anic verses God invites humans to have a direct relationship with Him without any mediator or intercessor, and He prohibits them from worshipping anything other than Him under any circumstance or for any justification. God, the Most Wise, did not prescribe for people religious rites that would affect the direct relationship between Himself and humans, such as baptism confession, or

belief in man as a savior, or as an intermediary. Indeed, God is too great and perfect to will a thing that would lower Himself to a level of weakness and inferiority. To claim that God humbled Himself and took a human form is to claim that He became feeble. And to claim that He decided to die means that He decided to be as weak as His weakest creature. It also means that those who were alive when He died would have been superior to Him!

To conclude, all false religions have in common one basic concept with regard to God; that God and His creation are one. They either claim that all men are God, or that specific men are God, or that nature is God, or that God is a figment of man's imagination or that man is a mediator between people and God. Thus, it may be said that false religions invite humans to the worship of creation instead of the Creator by calling the creation or some aspect of it 'God'.

VI. THE RELIGION'S NAME

Another evidence that Islam is the true religion can be identified by the meaning of the word "Islam" itself. Basically, the word ' Islam ' is an Arabic word that denotes submission and obedience. As a religion, Islam has two meanings; general and specific. Islam in general, refers to the religion which God revealed to all prophets: The worship of God alone

(Monotheism) and the avoidance of Paganism. This explains why in the Qur'an all prophets call themselves Muslims.[10] However, the word Islam also specifically refers to the religion that was revealed to Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him). None of the ‘previous religions’ were given specifically their name by God, except for this last religion - Islam.

Islam was not named after a person or a group of people, nor was it decided upon by later generations of humans. Indeed, the name Islam was given by God Himself as is clearly mentioned in the Qur’an in many verses (e.g. **“Indeed, the only religion accepted by Allah is Islam.”**[3:19]). On the other hand, Christianity was named after Jesus Christ (by its followers), and Judaism after the tribe of Judah. However, it is not mentioned anywhere in the Bible that the religion of the followers of Prophets Isaac and Moses and their descendants is called Judaism, or that the religion of the followers of Christ[11] is called Christianity. In other words, the names ‘Judaism’ and

[10] Consequently, one should not regard Islam as an innovation that was brought by the Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him), but as the original message of God (in its fundamentals) to all prophets throughout history.

11 Both the names ‘Jesus’ and ‘Christ’ are derived from Hebrew words, through Greek and Latin. Jesus is the English equivalent and Latin form of the Greek ‘Iesous’, which in

‘Christianity’ had no divine origin or approval. It was not until long after Jesus' departure that the name Christianity was given to the religion of those claiming to be his followers. The same applies for Buddhism, which was named after Gautama Buddha, Confucianism after Confucius, Marxism after Karl Marx, and Hinduism after the Hindus and so on.

VII. THE SIX ARTICLES OF ISLAMIC FAITH

Islamic belief is based on the following six fundamental articles of faith:

1. **Belief in God.** This includes the following beliefs:

    - Belief in God’s existence. The existence of man and the entire universe is not a mere accident or the product of chance. This universe and everything that is in it manifests and points to the realization of a Creator.

Hebrew is ‘Yeshua’. ‘Christos’ is a Greek translation of the Hebrew ‘messiah’, which means ‘the anointed’.

- Belief that God is the Creator, the Sustainer, the Owner of the Universe and its contents, the provider of everything, the Giver of life and the Causer of death.
- Belief that God is the only One who has the right to be worshipped.
- Belief in God's names and attributes which befit His Majesty. He does not resemble His creation, God says in the Qur'an: "**There is nothing like Him**" [42:11].

2. Belief in the Angels

Angels are creatures created by God for specific functions in this world. They are normally invisible and they have no free will; they do as God commands them. They are not to be worshipped. Angel Gabriel was responsible for conveying the revelation to the prophets. Two angels are assigned to every human being to record their good and evil deeds. Another angel accompanies each human being encouraging him/her to do good deeds. Others blow the human spirit into the fetus when it reaches the end of the fourth month and others take the human spirit at the time of its death by

God's permission. There are other angels that have other responsibilities too many to enumerate in this small booklet.[12]

3. Belief in the Scriptures

This article of faith refers to belief in all the scriptures revealed by God to His messengers in their original form. These scriptures form the enlightenment which the messengers received to show their people the right path of God. All the revealed books call to the worship of God alone and avoidance of worshipping other than Him or others besides Him. However, due to the difference between nations in time and locations, there was some difference in the canonical teachings (Law) between scriptures according to the wisdom of God.

Muslims believe in the previous books mentioned in the Qur'an: the books of Abraham (Suhuf), the Scripture of Moses (Torah), the Psalms of David (Zaboor) and the Gospel of Prophet Jesus (Al-Injeel). However, long before the advent of Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him), they had all been lost or distorted by later generations over the centuries. They were polluted with myths, superstitions, idolatry and

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[12] See for detail " The explanation of the three fundamentals " for Sheikh Muhammad S. Al-Othaimeen, published at Alhidaayah, U.K..

irrational philosophical beliefs, carrying contradicting thoughts. Hence, the original scriptures are no longer in existence. A brief historical review, for example, of the evolution of Christianity from pure monotheism into tri-theism within the first 400 years after Jesus' departure clearly illustrates this process of degeneration.[13]

The Qur'an

However, God, the Most Compassionate, didn't leave man to go astray without an unadulterated reference. Indeed, He revealed the Qur'an and promised to preserve it as the final revelation for humankind for all times. It is the word of God which He revealed to Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) through the Angel Gabriel. It was revealed in parts over a period of 23 years. The Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) dictated the revelation to his companions who wrote it down during his lifetime on palm leaves, parchments, bones, flat stones, etc. In addition, the Qur'an was committed to heart by many of Prophet Muhammad's companions. One year after the death of Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him), the first Caliph, Abu-

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[13] See " The True Message of Jesus Christ", " Jesus a Prophet of Islam", " The Myth of God Incarnate", for further reading on this subject.

Bakr, instructed the Prophet's companions to collect the whole Qur'an in one volume. The third Caliph, Uthman, prepared several copies from the original text and sent them to the major centers of Islamic Civilization. From that time onwards, more than 1400 years ago, the same Qur'anic text has been in use with the exact wording, order and language (Arabic). Not a single word from its 114 chapters has been changed since it was revealed. Indeed, God promised in the Qur'an to preserve it forever. He said: **"Verily, I have sent down the Qur'an, and indeed, I will guard it from corruption."**[14] (15:9)

An essential point to understand about the Qur'an is that it is a miracle both in its revelation and content. At the time of the revelation and since, there have been those who have denied the divine and miraculous nature of the Qur'an saying that Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was either taught by others or that he wrote it by himself! In order to counteract this claim, God lays down a challenge to the whole of humankind saying: **" If you are in doubt concerning what I have revealed to My slave (Muhammad), then produce one chapter like it**

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[14] The teachings of Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) explain and elaborate the Qur'anic verses. They also explain in minute detail the manner of worship as performed by the Prophet. These teachings were meticulously collected and reported by the Prophet's companions (may God reward them all).

and you may call on your helpers beside Allah, if you are truthful.” (2:23) These are from the prophecies which the Qur’an foretold as no one from the time of the Prophet (mercy and peace of God be upon him) until this day has been able to produce the like of one chapter or even a verse of the Qur’an.

4. Belief in the Messengers of God

This article of faith addresses the belief that God conveyed His message through selected human beings. These individuals, called prophets and messengers, were selected by God to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented. God sent to every nation a prophet(s) to convey the message that He alone was to be worshipped and any thing worshipped along with Him or besides Him is false. The Qur’an mentions the names of only twenty-five of the prophets while indicating that many others were not mentioned by name. The first of these prophets was Adam and the last was Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon them all). Every prophet was sent to a specific people for specific periods of time except Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) who was sent to all people until the Final Hour. The proofs that Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was a messenger of God are more than a thousand; all are mentioned in his biography. The greatest proof is

the miracle of the Qur'an, which couldn't have been conveyed but by a messenger. Indeed, mention of Prophet Muhammad's coming can be found in the books of the Bible in spite of the changes which have taken place in their texts (See Deut. 18:18, 18:15; Isaiah 29:12; Songs of Solomon 5:16; John 16:12-14 & John 14: 15-16).

5. Belief in the Last Day

Islam teaches that this life is but a test of conduct for man to see whether or not he will follow the commands of God. In the Hereafter, people will be resurrected and stand before God for a just reckoning of their worldly deeds and actions. People with good deeds will be generously rewarded and warmly welcomed to the heavens of God. However, those with bad records will be punished and cast into Hell. People have been given knowledge of right and wrong, instinctively and through revelation, and they must choose their path in this short life. Their choices in this life will ultimately determine their places in the eternal life to come. God says in the Qur'an**: "Whosoever has done an atom's weight of good will see it, and whosoever has done an atom's weight of evil will see it."** (99:7-8)

Belief in the Day of Judgment implants in man's heart the consciousness of God, impelling man and society at large to obey Him sincerely without any external pressure.

6. The Belief in Predestination

It includes the belief in the following:

a) God knows everything. His knowledge is not bound by time. Past, present and future are all known to Him.

b) Everything which takes place is already written in a book called: The Preserved Tablet.

c) God has created everything, including the actions of people, the good and the bad, but He commanded people to do good deeds and forbade them from doing evil.

d) One must believe that everything that happens in this Universe is happening with God's permission, and nothing can take place against His will.

It should be noted that God's prior knowledge of things does not mean that human beings have no choice. Human beings choose, but God knows their choices prior to their choosing and action.

VIII. THE PILLARS OF ISLAM

Worship in Islam is an all inclusive term for all action and sayings that God loves. Every virtuous action which is performed with the

intention of carrying the commandments of God and seeking His pleasure is considered as an act of worship. However, the very specific acts of worship are five. They stand as the framework of spiritual life on which the structure of Islam rests. They are the following:

1. The two Declarations of faith of which the Arabic transliteration is (Ashhadu an la elaaha illa Allah, wa Ashhadu anna Muhammad Rasool Allah) which means: I testify that there is no god worthy of worship but God, and I testify that Muhammad is the messenger of God. The sincere declaration of God's unity and the acceptance of Muhammad's prophethood and adherence to his teachings automatically brings one within the fold of Islam and guarantees him Paradise. Hence, Monotheism is the cornerstone of Islam. The acceptance of this belief differentiates the Muslim from the non-Muslim.

2. Prayers: Formal Prayers are prescribed five times daily as a duty to God at the following times: dawn, noon, afternoon, sunset and nightfall. A Muslim may offer formal prayers almost anywhere as long as the location is clean. Muslim males are enjoined to pray in congregation in a mosque, while females are encouraged to pray in their homes. Prayer provides human beings with a regular contact with God, which helps them avoid evil. Furthermore, it is symbolic of equality, for the poor and the rich, the ruler and the ruled, the black and the white stand together, united in rows,

shoulder to shoulder and prostrate themselves before God. Prayer strengthens the belief in God and elevates man to a higher morality. It helps to purify the heart and prevent temptation towards wrong – doing and evil.

3. Zakah (Charity): Every Muslim whose net annual savings are above a certain specified minimum must pay an annual amount of 2.5% of his savings to the poor and needy people in the community. Zakah fosters generosity and helps purify the soul of selfishness and greed. Zakah also helps reduce resentment and envy between poor and rich members of the society.

4. Fasting the month of Ramadhan: Fasting in Islam means abstention from food, drink and sexual acts from dawn to sunset. It is an annual obligation during the month of Ramadhan, the ninth month of the lunar calendar. Fasting teaches sincerity and engenders devotion. It develops a sense of social conscience, patience, self-restraint, will power and compassion for the needy members of the society. Furthermore, it has been medically proven that fasting helps to maintain good health.

5. Hajj (Pilgrimage to Makkah): Hajj is obligatory for every Muslim once in a lifetime, if one can afford it financially and bear it physically. During Hajj, Muslims from all corners of the world meet in an international congregation dedicated to the worship of God. It is a great lesson in patience. The huge gatherings in Hajj remind one of the Day of Judgment

when people will gather for their reckoning. It emphasizes the belief that all Muslims are brothers, irrespective of their geographical, cultural or racial origins.

IX. ISLAM AND OTHER RELIGIONS

One may ask: "If all true religions came with the same message, namely the worship of God alone, why then do we find differences between them?" The answer is that the original forms of these earlier messages were either lost or distorted by later generations. Consequently, the pure messages of monotheism became polluted with myths, superstitions, idolatry and irrational philosophical beliefs and hence, those religions are no more valid. But God, the Compassionate, did not leave human beings astray. He sent, ultimately, Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) to revive the original message and to call human beings back to the correct path: belief in the unique oneness of God and worship of Him according to His teachings mentioned in the Qur'an. Consequently, Islam is the seal of all religions, and the Qur'an is the seal of all revealed books, and Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) is the seal of all prophets.

X. BEAUTIES OF ISLAM

All of the Qur'an is a proclamation of Tawheed (The Oneness and Unity of God). Some of the verses inform about God, His Names, Attributes, Acts and Speech. These verses indicate the Unity and Oneness of God with respect to His most excellent Names and perfect Attributes. Other verses call to the necessity of worshipping God alone, without any associate or partner and the renunciation of worship of anything other than Him. These verses indicate the Oneness and Unity of Worship and the necessity for people to single out their Lord in their intention, desire, requesting and their turning to Him. The Qur'an also contains injunctions and prohibitions, and so the doing of something or refraining from doing it is the fulfillment and perfection of the affirmation of the Oneness and Unity of God. In addition, the Qur'an includes stories and information about the people of true and sincere belief and tells of their immediate reward in the life of this world as well as the immense reward reserved for them in the hereafter. The Qur'an also contains stories about those who associate partners with God and informs of their punishment in the life of this world and the punishment they are promised in the hereafter. This is the reward for those that associate partners with God and deviate from affirmation of God's Oneness and Unity.

The Qur'an calls for the correcting and strengthening of peoples' relationship with their Lord, and their relationship with each other. It also calls for people to correct and straighten their own selves, both inwardly and outwardly.

Concerning the correcting and strengthening of the relationship between a person and his Lord, the Qur'an calls for people to draw close to Him through both physical and financial acts of worship such as prayer, Hajj, sacrifice and so forth. In addition, the Qur'an calls to the knowledge of God through His Names and Attributes and this instills fear and awe of the Lord in peoples' hearts and establishes discipline in applying God's commands and prohibitions and strengthens the relationship between people and their Lord.

Concerning the straightening of a person's relationship with other people, the Qur'an calls to behaviour which strengthens and reinforces social relationships such as the importance given to the role of the family. So treating parents kindly, maintaining good relations with other family members, seeing to the rights and needs of wives and children, doing good to neighbours are all obligatory while disobeying parents, severing family ties and social isolation are all prohibited. The Qur'an also instructs that reconciliation should be encouraged between husband and wife if a dispute

occurs between them to avoid the break up of the family and separation of the children.

In addition, the Qur'an instructs that all people should be treated with high moral behavior and noble manners such as smiling with them, being gentle in speech to them, controlling one's anger with them, forgiving any harm or offence they may have caused and even returning that harm with good, in order that any spite or hatred might be removed from the hearts and that enmity be turned into love and affection. Whoever achieves this is promised an immense reward.

The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, instructed that even animals be treated fairly and with kindness, instructing that they should be fed and watered and informing that such action would be rewarded on the Day of Resurrection. He also instructed that they should not be made to carry a burden more than they could bear, nor tormented or caused undue suffering or killed unless they were harmful. And if an animal was to be eaten then it should be made to feel relaxed at the time of slaughter and other animals should not be slaughtered in front of it.

The Qur'an also enjoins both physical and spiritual cleanliness and purification. It encourages that the body be kept clean, the wearing of clean clothes and shoes and the use of perfume. A bath should be taken every Friday and after sexual intercourse and ablution performed before prayer,

nails should be clipped, hair under the armpit plucked, pubic hair shaved, the moustache trimmed, the siwak (the small branch of a tree used for cleaning the teeth) used regularly and the private parts washed after going to the toilet.

Concerning spiritual purity the Qur’an instructs that the soul be straightened and corrected and that the heart be purified of spite, malice, jealousy, pride and inequity. It calls for integrity of heart and love, affection and humility towards people. It instructs that the tongue be purified from lying, backbiting, slander and insulting people and adorned with truthfulness and softness of speech. The eyes should be restrained from looking at pornographic pictures and at peoples’ private parts and the ears should be kept from listening to loose and immoral talk. The Qur’an praises and encourages knowledge and criticizes ignorance saying that it leads to destruction. It commands to action and dynamism while prohibiting inaction and laziness. Likewise, the Qur’an calls to all similar praiseworthy behavior and virtuous qualities.

The Qur’an orders that children be born within a legal marriage contract and that sexual desire be controlled and contained within these parameters. Marriage is fulfilled by the obligatory payment of a dowry by the husband and by his supporting his wife and children financially and treating them kindly. In the same manner, the Qur’an prohibits fornication

because it is one of the worst assaults on other peoples' honour and dignity and something which causes disease and produces illegitimate children. Likewise, the Qur'an forbids everything which leads to fornication and so it prohibits looking at pornographic pictures and being alone with marriageable women. It also commands that men should lower their gaze from looking or staring at improperly dressed women just as it has ordered women to dress modestly and cover their bodies.

The Qur'an also calls to the protection and sanctity of peoples' lives and specifically mentions that the taking of an innocent life is one of the worst and most hideous crimes. The Prophet forbade breaking the bones of a dead animal so what about the taking of an innocent life? The Qur'an prescribes a life for a life and an eye for an eye for all injuries, however large or small, unless the family of the person killed or the injured person accepts financial compensation instead.

The Qur'an commands that peoples' property and wealth be safe and inviolable and therefore prohibits theft, bribery, usury and deception. It calls for moderation in spending and so forbids extravagance, lavishness and the squandering of money while at the same time forbidding the hoarding and amassing of wealth. It calls for balance and commands that people should neither be greedy and covetous nor spend thrifty and wasteful. It encourages the seeking and striving for provision in lawful ways such as buying, selling

and renting - activities that bring financial or material benefit to all parties concerned - as well as safeguarding the rights and needs of the poor, especially those of them who are relatives.

Islam promotes the protection of good health and has therefore commanded that only wholesome and nutritious food in moderation be eaten and has prohibited the consumption of all bad and harmful food and drink such as carrion, liquor, smoking, drugs and so forth. It also prescribes fasting that has many benefits for the body, especially the stomach.

The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, taught many general good manners, including the virtue of adopting the correct manners for eating and drinking. These include eating with the right hand and not finding fault with the food but rather being satisfied with it. Therefore, if someone likes the food, they should eat it but if they have no appetite for it, they should leave it without criticizing it. This is both out of respect for the blessing of the food and in order not to hurt the feelings of the person who cooked it. It is also preferred that a person eats with others and not alone, either by eating with his family or by inviting a poor person to eat with him. The words 'In the name of God' (bismillah) should be said before beginning to eat, and 'All praise belongs to God' (Al-hamdulillah) after finishing the food, in order that people remember the blessing they have been given and the One who provided it. The prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, also

prohibited people from blowing on food or drink or breathing on to it, out of respect for others who may be sharing it and to avoid the spread of contagious diseases.

The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, instructed people to adopt good manners when in a gathering such as not raising one's voice, respecting elders, showing mercy to the young, greeting those present (saying as-salaam) when entering the gathering and guarding the tongue from saying bad things about people, even if it is true.

The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, also instructed people to remember God at all times and in every situation. This creates a permanent connection between people and their Lord and instills stability, stillness and tranquility in their hearts and it is one of the means of protecting against evil and vice. The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, for example instructed that specific invocations be said at the time of sleep, before entering the toilet, before sexual intercourse, while traveling, due to fear of a people, upon entering or leaving one's house, first thing in the morning and in the afternoon, on being afflicted by distress, anxiety or misfortune, when burdened by debt or poverty, upon entering a graveyard, when stopping for a rest or setting up camp and other situations when specific invocations and prayers should be said.

Another aspect of general behaviour which the Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, gave guidance about concerns correct behaviour and manners when traveling. For example, he instructed that the one traveling should say goodbye to his family and supplicate for them just as they should supplicate and pray for him. In addition, he instructed that a person should not travel alone but in company, one of whom should be appointed as the leader, who undertakes to make decisions after consulting the others. The traveler should also make continual invocation and remembrance of God during his journey. He should also not surprise his family by returning unexpectedly late at night. Rather, he should inform them before he arrives in order that the wife can prepare for his arrival or leave returning until the following morning.

The Prophet, mercy and peace be upon him, also instructed that a woman should not travel by herself but travel either with her husband or with someone who she cannot marry such as her father or brother to ensure that both her honour and wealth are protected.

Islam calls for justice and noble conduct and urges that agreements and contracts be fulfilled, that trusts are returned, that rulers are obeyed and enjoins every noble character just as it forbids vileness, baseness, crime, oppression, hostility, aggression and all blameworthy and reprehensible qualities.

XI. ISLAM, THE UNIVERSAL RELIGION

Islam is a universal message because God sent every previous prophet to his own people for limited periods of time except Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) who was sent to *all people*; black and white, rich and poor, the ruler and the ruled, Arabs and non-Arabs, the slave and the master. Islam is for all people from when it was revealed until the Day of Judgment. It is universally attainable in the sense that it can be practiced anywhere on earth ((or even on the surface of the moon)).

XII. FEATURES OF ISLAMIC TEACHINGS

God has made the message of Islam easy to understand and to follow. He annulled some previously prescribed rites and practices while affirming others according to His wisdom and hence, the Islamic law suits all peoples' spiritual, psychological, social and economical needs, for all times.

Islamic teachings have the following unique features:

1. **Rational teachings:** The seeker of truth will find the teachings of Islam to be quite logical and reasonable.

2. **Perfection:** Since God is perfect, His teachings must also be perfect and free from any contradiction or error.
3. **Clarity:** God is the Most Compassionate. He guides us through clear and simple revelation free of myths, superstitions and mysteries.
4. **Scientific:** It is not surprising to find in the Qur'an and statements of Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) some information which has only recently been discovered by modern scientists. This points to the fact that the Qur'an is the word of God and that Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) is a prophet of God.[15]
5. **Prophecy:** Many of the events prophesized in the Qur'an and Prophet's sayings (Sunnah) have come to pass.
6. **Moderate:** In Islam, there is no conflict between spiritual and mundane life. Man is accountable for all his actions and everyday activities. Provided they are done with the correct intention, they are a means to achieve divine reward in the same way that specific acts of worship are. So, secularism, materialism, monasticism and extreme asceticism are all rejected in Islam, which provides a middle way to achieve harmony and balance between the spiritual and

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[15] See " The Qur'an and Modern Science " by Dr. Maurice Bucaille.

material needs of man. This is why God called the Muslim Nation in the Qur'an: **the Moderate Nation**. (2:143)

7. **Comprehensive:** Islamic teachings provide to people definite guidelines to follow in all walks of life: spiritual, individual, social, moral, political, economical, etc.
8. **Inimitable:** Islamic teachings are an infallible living miracle that cannot be imitated by people.
9. **Equality:** Islamic teachings do not discriminate between people on the basis of colour, tribe, race, nationality, etc. because people descend from one father and one mother namely Adam and Eve. Islam teaches that the criteria of good and bad is righteousness (i.e., the best person in the view of God is the most righteous). A verse of the Glorious Qur'an reads: **: "The best of you in the sight of God is the one who is most righteous. " (49:13)**

XIII. WHY ISLAM?

W**e have to become Muslims** because God has sealed and superseded all previous messages with Islam. God says to all people in the Qur'an: **"This day I have perfected your religion for you, completed My favor upon you, and have chosen for you Islam as your religion."** (5:3)

We have to become Muslims because people in every age must worship their Lord (Allah) according to the Law prescribed by Him as revealed to His prophet. The tribes of Israel, for example, were ordered to worship God according to the Law of Moses (mercy and peace of God be upon him). When Prophet Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was sent to them, they were ordered to worship God according to what was prescribed in the Gospel (Al-Injeel). Then, when God sent Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) with the message of Islam to all people, it became incumbent on all people, **the tribes of Israel and all others**, to enter Islam.

If, for whatever reason, man rejects the message of Islam, then he has committed the greatest sin. Unfortunately, if he dies in this state, then he will be punished and cast into the Hellfire to live eternally therein. This concept is emphasized hundreds of times in the Qur’an and in the sayings of Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him). God says in the Qur’an: **“If anyone desires a Religion other than Islam, never will it be accepted from him, and in the Hereafter he will be among the losers.”** (3:85) Also, Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) said: **“Whoever among the Christians and Jews hears of me and**

does not follow what I have brought, and dies in this state will be among the inhabitants of Hell fire."[16]

Some people may not accept Islam because they think that becoming a Muslim means to turn one's back on all previous prophets sent by God! This is a false concept because of the following: First, the belief in all messengers of God is a pillar of Islamic faith and hence, no Muslim is a Muslim if he doesn't believe in Jesus, Moses or any other prophet. Second, belief in the messengers is a part of what each messenger taught (i.e., every prophet called his people to believe in the next prophet who comes after him and follow him whenever he appears). So, rejecting a prophet means rejecting the predecessor. Thirdly, rejecting any messenger means rejecting his sender: God.

Hence, in the Islamic perspective the relationship between the messengers is like the relationship between the links in a chain, where rejecting one of them means rejecting all. However, becoming a Muslim means having the honor of believing in all the prophets who came before Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon them) and not to turn one's back on all previous prophets as some people may think.

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[16] Sahih Muslim (284).

XIV. CONCLUSION

The following facts were discussed and proved in this booklet:

First, the purpose of creation is to worship God (Allah) alone.

Second, the basic message of Islam is to worship God alone without any intercessor or mediator.

Third, evidences that only God has the right to be worshipped was elaborated.

Fourth, the message of false religions is the worship of creation instead of God (Paganism).

Fifth, God and His creation are totally different entities. He is only one, distinct from His creations.

Sixth, the divine origin of the name of the religion 'Islam' and the comprehensiveness of its meaning points to its truth.

Seventh, Islam's basic principles and characteristics point to its truth.

Eighth, Qur'an is the word of God which was preserved throughout the ages.

Ninth, Islamic teachings are uniquely rational and uncomplicated.

Tenth, Prophets are human beings sent by God to convey and revive the original message: worship of God alone and (Monotheism) and the avoidance of worshipping anything beside Him. Prophets are only human beings sent by God to be examples of how the scriptures were to be understood and implemented. They were created from a mother and a father except Adam and Jesus (mercy and peace of God be upon them all). The former was created from the clay whereas, the latter was created from a mother without a father.

Eleventh, Islam is the only religion that teaches the right concept of God, free of any confusion or irrational facts.

Twelfth, Islamic sources have the obvious proofs that affirm the fact that God has sent Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) with the universal message of Islam that supersedes all previous messages.

Thirteenth, it is proved that Islam is a restatement of the basic message of all religions: worship of God alone. It is the last religion for all people, for all times. Every one who hears about it should follow it and whoever rejects it then it means that he has rejected the message of God and accordingly will be cast into Hell.

Last but not least, Islam is universally attainable by all people at all times.

These are fourteen basic components of what logic and rationality dictate for Islam to be considered the last and true religion of God which all people should follow.

Oh Reader! You Have been shown in this booklet the right path, and God has given you the ability to distinguish right from wrong, and the freedom of choice whether to accept the message of Islam or not. If you accept His call, then you will be warmly welcomed into Paradise. If you reject it, you will be in for a rude awakening once you die; the biggest shock of your life.

XV. HOW TO BECOME A MUSLIM

Each of the following religions has requirements for entrants:
To be a Jew one must: 1. Deny the prophethood or divinity of Prophet Jesus, 2. Deny the Gospel, 3. Deny the prophethood of Prophet Muhammad and 4. Deny the Qur'an.

To be a Christian one must: 1. Believe that God has a partner, a mother, and a son, 2. Believe that God became a man and descended on earth to die for the sins of people, 3. Deny the prophethood of Muhammad and 4. Deny the Qur'an.

To be a Muslim one must: 1. Bear witness that no one deserves worship except God, 2. Reject all false gods, 3. Believe in all prophets including Moses and Jesus ending with Mohammed (mercy and peace of God be upon them all) and 4. Believe in all scriptures revealed to them (in their original form).

One can become a Muslim if he/she does the following:

- Believes that God is one and distinct from his creation.
- Truthfully bears witness that there is no god worthy of worship but God, and Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him) was a messenger of God.
- Believes that Jesus Christ, the son of Mary, was only a prophet of God.
- Believes in the six pillars of faith and worships God alone, without any intermediary or partner, in the way taught by Prophet Muhammad (mercy and peace of God be upon him).
- Makes the declaration openly in front of witnesses.

May the light of truth shine in our minds and hearts. May it lead us to peace and certitude in this life and eternal bliss in the Hereafter.

Sincerely,

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FURTHER READING MATERIAL ABOUT ISLAM

1. Interpretation of the Meanings of the Noble Qur'an, Distributed by Darussalam, P.O. Box 21441 – Riyadh 11475, Tel. 014033962 , K.S.A www.dar-us-salam.com
2. The explanation of the three fundamentals. Sheikh Muhammad S. Al-Othaimeen, Dar Al-hidaayah (www.al-hidaayah.co.uk)
3. The Purpose of Creation, Dr. Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah, P.O. Box 23424, Sharjah, U.A.E.
4. The True Message of Jesus Christ, Dr. Bilal Philips, Dar Al Fatah,
5. Christian Muslim Dialogue, by M. Baageel,
6. Forty Hadith of Nawawi,
7. A Simple Call to One God.
8. Let the Bible Speak, by Ali Muhsen or Abdur Rahman Dimishqia
9. The Bible led me to Islam, Abdul-Malik LeBlanc, Al-Attique Publisher, www.al-attique.com
10. The Status of Women in Islam, Dr. Jamal Badawi,
11. The Qur'an and Modern Science, Dr. Maurice Bucaille

12. Understanding Islam and Muslims.

You may also visit the following sites for Islamic publications and information:

www.islam-qa.com

www.dar-us-salam.com

www.al-hidaayah.co.uk

www.bilalphilips.com

www.al-attique.com